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## THE JAPANESE IN TRAVEL

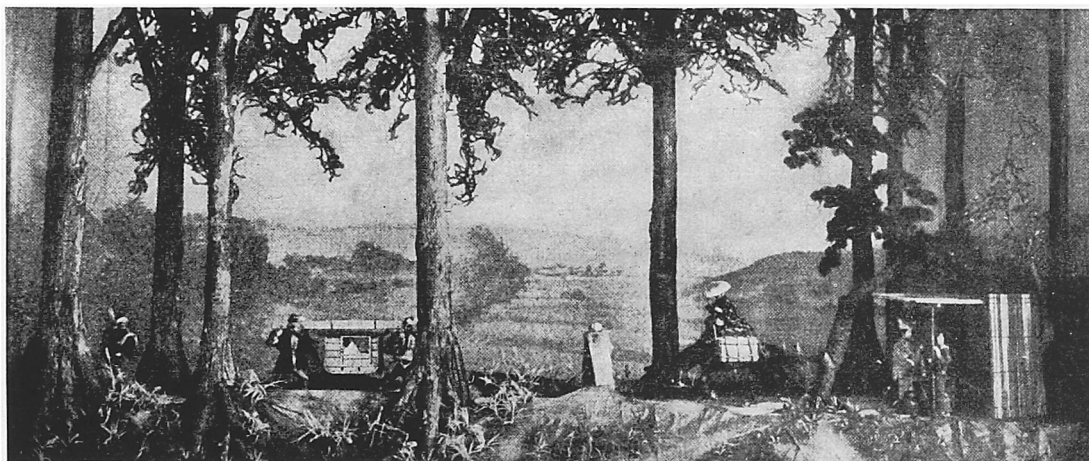
THE Japanese have always been great travellers. It was no doubt their daring and migratory instincts that brought the Yamato to the sunrise islands of Nippon; and down to the present day the people of Japan are still given to much travelling, not only about their own beautiful country at home but also in going out to foreign lands. As one goes about in Japan one sees many more Japanese travelling than one sees of citizens so engaged in other countries. A Japanese train, especially the third-class carriages, is always much more crowded than a European or an American train. At all times large numbers of persons appear to be on the move in one direction or another.

Of the travelling methods of our Nipponese ancestors we know very little, though we are accustomed to make certain inferences from philology. The word *tabi*, which, in the vernacular, means "travelling," originally, I suppose, meant the same as it does in *kono tabi* (this time) and *hito tabi* (one time); so that it implies a course of time, as *haru no tabi* (during spring time) and *natsu no tabi* (in summer time). The idea is that of a continued course, or something that goes on.

Of course the progress of conquest and civilization in any land involves travel; and the earliest mention of travel in Japan is connected with the exploits of the first Emperor, Jimmu Tenno. The Emperor Jimmu is represented as moving from Hyuga to Yamato by vari-

ous routes over sea and land. Certain gods are referred to in our mythology as travelling over the country to bestow blessing on the grassy plain and the cultivated field. At a very early stage in their development the Japanese were an agricultural people and most of their travelling was confined to going forth to their daily toil in the field or woods. Hunting also called forth the spirit of exploration and venturing far from home. The Japanese word, *ryoko*, used for travelling sometimes, implies going out from home on some errand or another.

Among the earliest mentions of travel, as a custom, in Japan is that of *tsuma magi*, or the wife-hunting trip. It was doubtless a custom of our primitive forefathers to go out in search of wives. They, no less than Europeans, soon learned, as civilization proceeded, that it was not good for relatives to marry. As the population was sparse, wives were not always to be had; that is, wives sufficiently distant in blood relationship. Consequently the men went foraging for them, and took the most promising females they came across, and possibly with less bloodshed than happened in the rape of the Sabines. The earliest reference to wife-hunting journeys is that in the old song sung by the god *Okuninushi*, in which the deity is represented as saying: "I went out and searched all over the expanse of the eight islands, and none could I find suitable to wife, etc." No



En Route

doubt the example of the highest was emulated freely by the lower orders of society, so far as society could be said to have existed.

Most probably, however, the more frequent long journeys of our earlier ancestors were taken in connection with war. The Chinese word *ryo*, meaning travel, implies a multitude, or five hundred; so that it very likely was first used of those going out to fight or on a campaign of conquest. The Emperor Keiko, and the Empress Jingo, are spoken of as going out in this way, the great deeds recorded of them being ascribed to their travels. There was no doubt travel between countries in the East; for we have reference to messengers and envoys from the Court of Korea, and also of China, to the Court of Japan, and of those bringing tribute from distant provinces. As to travel for mere pleasure, we may assume that it was not very extensive. Pleasure trips are now the privilege of the most common among us, but in ancient times such trips were possible only to great officials. We have mention of the Emperor Keikō going out for a trip to the eastern provinces, and of the Emperor Shotoku visiting the hot springs at Iyo,

trips evidently made for the sake of health or pleasure. It must not be supposed, however, that there was not a good deal of travel for commercial purposes, as civilization developed and the nation made progress. No doubt merchants found their way from China to Japan and Japanese merchants to China and Korea; and certainly in later times to India and the islands of the Pacific. But travel within the confines of the Empire was doubtless more practised than ventures outside of national borders. There is record of how a wealthy family of merchants named Hataromatsure, in the reign of the Emperor Kimmei, opened a trade route from their home at Fukakusa to Isé.

As to mode of travel in old Japan we may suppose that it was on foot or on horseback. One of the oldest of our ancient odes says "Other men's wives ride on horseback; and must mine alone go on foot?" Vehicles appeared only as roads became opened up and improved. The "Heaven-winged" car of our old mythology, which was used by the god *Okuninushi* must have been some sort of aeroplane, though wagons are mentioned as being used by the Emperor



A Post Station

Ojin and the Emperor Yuryaku in the III or IV century. The use of wheeled carriages was probably confined to the roads in the vicinity of the Imperial Palace, when the sovereign went out for fresh air; these cars were not for general travelling or for journeys of any great length. There was an old saying among the early Japanese which ran: "Take horses to go east and boats to go west." No doubt there is much to be inferred from this statement. Probably water communication was the most convenient and the most popular form of travel among the early inhabitants of Japan. The prevalence of such names as *funakoshi* (ferry) even in inland places points not only to the most ancient mode of travel but to the fact that boats were often portaged over roads and mountain passes as modes of conveyance over lakes and rivers as well as along the coasts and over great bays. The day of bridges had, of course, not yet come. Valley routes were known as *kai*; and because the province of Kai was inaccessible by this way of travel, it received its name.

Toward the mediæval period of Japanese history vast improvements came about in modes of travel. After Japan

lost control of Korea there was not so much travel overseas, but there was a more intensive internal development in compensation. The *daimyo* not only made journeys for war purposes but to the Imperial Court to pay homage and tribute. The poem of Akahito referring to Mount Fuji proves that travel for pleasure had far developed in the VIII and IX centuries. During the Heian era there was too much of a disposition to effeminacy to encourage much travel among the upper classes. From Kyoto they seldom ventured further afield than their summer villas at Suma or Akashi. At this time there were those who made trips to India and China, however, most of them being bent on religious pilgrimages. It is probable, too, that there was constant communication with China at this time, for commercial as well as political reasons.

Buddhism did a good deal toward encouraging travel within the Empire; for it inaugurated the custom of making pilgrimages from shrine to shrine, a custom that is still in vogue and involves an immense amount of travel among the Japanese from year to year. Religion has always had a great influence in making people travel and bringing

about not only a commingling of society from divergent parts but a mixing and interchange of ideas as well. The missionary has been and still is the herald of universal knowledge and world-wide brotherhood. Among the great travellers of ancient Nippon was the famous priest Kobo Daishi, and he had numberless imitators. The itinerant priests went all over the country. People would probably never have climbed Fuji-san simply for the purpose of getting a fine view; it was for the purpose of worship they ventured up those glorious heights.

By this time panniers began to be used on horses; and the traveller could take along baggage as well as his wife and family. There were no inns in early Japan; and private houses were not always ready to render hospitality, often for want of room, but more often for fear of contracting some dire disease the traveller might have. Consequently travellers had to put up by the roadside, sleeping under the trees. Where great caves happened to be in some rocky wall, was a favourite stopping place for the belated pedestrian or horseman. In time post towns sprang up with accommodations for the wayfarer. This was hastened by the demand of such stations for military reasons. Every thirty *ri*, that is, about every seventy-five miles, there was a military post station, where travellers could be put up for the night. At these places stage horses were kept in stock for hire. Toward the different capitals that grew up, such as Kyoto, Nara, Kamakura and Yedo, great roads were opened up from all directions and travel increased immensely. Along these routes post houses were always open, with horses for the traveller. Some of

these post houses were on lonely plains far from any other dwelling. Between the various provinces barriers were set up to mark the boundary; and travellers were not permitted to cross these unless they could give a satisfactory account of themselves. As a rule more freedom was accorded pilgrims, in this respect, than to ordinary travellers; and consequently religion had more influence in opening up intercourse between the various outlying parts of the Empire than any other factor.

During the Tokugawa era wheeled vehicles became common; for roads were now running through all the settled districts. Most of the vehicles were two-wheeled, after the Chinese fashion. The more dignified mode of travel, however, was by horse or by sedan chair, the great man being carried by his servants in a sort of palanquin. With the arrival of foreigners came the jinrickisha and the horse carriage, as well as the steamboat, and the railway train. But Japan has never gone in for the horse carriage to the same degree as the people of the West. In fact Japan has escaped the horse age; and passed from the age of *shanks mare* to the age of steam and electricity. We are still to be reckoned among the greatest walkers in the world. Our people put on a pair of *waraji*, or light straw sandals, and can walk all day without showing fatigue; and many persons thus spend the summer going from one sacred or beautiful place to another. Students often so spend their summer vacation. Today modes of travel in Japan are just the same as in western countries; the only difference being that the Japanese travel much more than the people of the West.

DR. TOGO YOSHIDA, in the *Japan Magazine*.